



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs (CFLs)

www.idem.IN.gov

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Description:

- Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) are energy-efficient, money-saving replacements for traditional incandescent light bulbs.
- CFLs cost a little more at the register, but they provide a savings over the life of the bulb.
 - CFLs cost approximately \$4 per bulb, while incandescent light bulbs generally cost \$0.50 per bulb.
 - ENERGY STAR qualified CFLs use up to 75 percent less energy than incandescent light bulbs and last up to 10 times longer.



Information compiled from www.ENERGYSTAR.gov.

Environmental Impacts:

- Switching to CFLs effectively reduces energy use at home and work, which can reduce air emissions from power plants. Lighting accounts for close to 20 percent of the average home's electric bill.
 - Changing your incandescent light bulb to a CFL reduces energy demand, which reduces the amount of coal burned and mercury emitted.
 - The State of Indiana is working to reduce mercury in the environment.
- CFLs contain a small amount of mercury.
 - CFLs contain an average of 5 milligrams of mercury, which is enough to cover the tip of a ballpoint pen. A watch battery contains about five times as much mercury.
 - The mercury is safely sealed inside the light bulb's glass tubing and is not emitted when CFLs are in use.
 - There is no substitute for mercury in CFLs, but many manufacturers have taken significant steps to reduce the amount of mercury inside their fluorescent lighting products.
 - Using CFLs saves energy and yields significant air quality benefits that outweigh the potential impacts related to the small amount of mercury contained in the light bulbs.

Citizen's Role:

- To prevent the release of mercury into the environment, take CFLs to your local recycling facility instead of throwing them away.
- Follow these guidelines to ensure proper handling, use and disposal of CFLs:
 - As with any light bulb, be careful when removing it from packaging, during installation, or when replacing it.
 - Always screw and unscrew the light bulb by its base (not the glass) and never forcefully twist the CFL into a light socket.
 - Always recycle burned-out and broken CFLs.
- Follow these guidelines for cleaning up a broken CFL:
 - Open a window and leave the room for 15 minutes to let the powder settle and vapors dissipate.
 - Using rubber gloves, carefully scoop up the bulb fragments and powder with stiff paper or cardboard and place in a sealable plastic bag, such as a freezer bag.
 - Pick up small glass shards with tape (such as duct tape or packaging tape). Wipe hard surfaces down with a damp paper towel or a disposable wet wipe and place the used towel or wipe in the plastic bag. Do not use a vacuum cleaner to clean up broken CFLs.
 - Seal all cleanup materials, including gloves and paper, in the plastic bag. Double-seal the plastic bag inside a second plastic bag and store outside or in the garage.
 - Take the sealed plastic bags and any other burned-out CFLs to your local solid waste management district or community household hazardous waste collection program for recycling.

IDEM's Role:

- The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) is responsible for protecting human health and the environment while providing for safe industrial, agricultural, commercial and governmental operations vital to a prosperous economy.
- IDEM's Office of Pollution Prevention and Technical Assistance (OPPTA) provides information and funding to local solid waste management districts and community mercury and household hazardous waste collection programs for items such as CFLs.

More Information:

- For information on recycling, visit the Recycle Indiana Web site at <http://www.recycle.IN.gov>.
- For information on your local solid waste management district, visit IDEM's Web site at <http://www.recycle.IN.gov/2888.htm>.
- For information on mercury, visit IDEM's Web site at <http://www.idem.IN.gov/4149.htm>.
- For questions and concerns, please call IDEM's Office of Pollution Prevention and Technical Assistance at (317) 232-8172 or, toll free, (800) 988-7901.
- For information on the ENERGY STAR program, visit the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Web site at www.energystar.gov.